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## MONOLINGUALISM VIA MULTILINGUALISM: A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE USE IN THE WEST UGANDAN TOWN OF HOIMA

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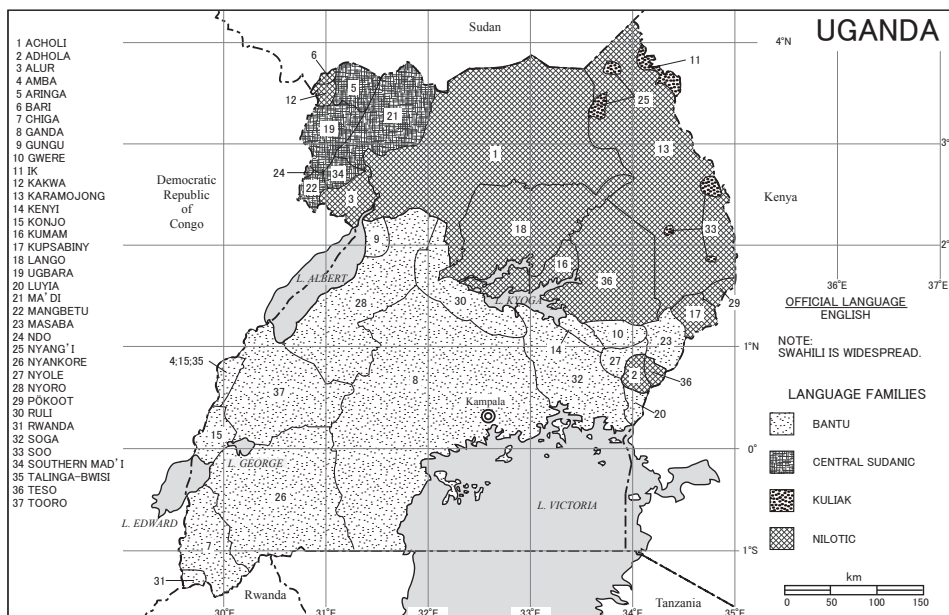
**ABSTRACT** Multilingualism is one of the most salient features of language use in Africa and, at first sight, Uganda appears to be just one example of this practice. However, as Uganda has no lingua franca that is widely used by its entire population, questions about how people cope with multilingualism arise. Answers to such questions can be found in the fact that people are able to create a monolingual state in a given area because everyone is multilingual. That is, people speak their own language in their own domain and speak other peoples' languages when they go to the latter's domains. This conclusion emerged from interviews conducted with 100 inhabitants of Hoima city in western Uganda, an area primarily inhabited by the Nyoro people. The linguistic situation in Hoima provides a valuable case study of what can happen in the absence of a fully developed lingua franca and can contribute to broader discussions of language use in Africa.

**Key Words:** Lingua franca; Multilingualism; Hoima; Nyoro; Uganda.

### INTRODUCTION

I have conducted linguistic research in Uganda since 2001. The main themes of my research relate to the grammatical and lexical characteristics of little-known languages in the area. In the course of research, however, I noticed differences between the use of language in Uganda and that in the regions where I had studied before. The most peculiar difference is that Uganda has no so-called lingua franca. In Africa generally speaking, the size of languages is relatively small, and a number of languages tend to be spoken in a given area. Due to this fact, people are generally multilingual. At the same time, as I confirmed in the eastern part of DR Congo, Tanzania, and parts of Senegal (see, for example, Kaji, 2007; 2009, etc.), lingua francas have developed in many parts of Africa. However, the situation in Uganda differs from that in these regions, forcing us to reconsider our understanding of language use in Africa.

It is clear that English and Swahili are used as kinds of lingua francas in Uganda, too. Nevertheless, they do not fully function as such. Indeed, English is scarcely understood in rural areas and, although Swahili is used by a number of people, its usage remains limited. This is quite different from the situation in the eastern part of DR Congo and Tanzania, where Swahili is widely spoken. In such a situation, questions about the sociolinguistic behavior of the Ugandan people arise. Uganda is a relatively small country, but it is said to contain about 40 different spoken languages<sup>(1)</sup> (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Language distribution in Uganda. Nyoro is number 28.

Source: Grimes (2000).

Working from this perspective, I conducted sociolinguistic interviews about language use in Hoima city, located in the western part of the country. This is also the place in which I formulated a description of the Nyoro language. In February 2010, I interviewed 100 Hoima inhabitants of various ages. Although most were Nyoro, members of other ethnic groups were also included. This research yielded very interesting results, as reflected in the title of this paper: “Monolingualism via multilingualism.”

## THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN HOIMA AND UGANDA

Hoima, a town in western Uganda with a population of 36,800 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2008), is the central city for the Nyoro people, who occupy this area. It is the site of the Nyoro royal palace and the capital of the District of Hoima. This area, as shown in Fig. 1, is the northernmost area of the Bantu zone, adjacent to the Central and Eastern Sudanic groups of the Nilo-Saharan phylum, especially the Nilotic groups of the Eastern Sudanic family.

As Hoima is the major city in this area, many people of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, including both Bantu and Sudanic-Nilotic speakers, visit and settle here. This region contains tea plantations and a large tea factory, located not far from the town of Hoima, which attract a variety of people as workers. Additionally, the oil recently found in Lake Albert may attract more people in the future. At present, the overwhelming majority of the population of Hoima is Nyoro, and the primary spoken language is Nyoro.



Fig. 2. City of Hoima.

In general, the linguistic structures of languages in different families differ, and some languages within the same family are mutually intelligible. For example, Nyoro,<sup>(2)</sup> Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga (all Bantu) are mutually intelligible. Along the same lines, Alur, Acholi, Langi, and Adhola (all Nilotic) are also mutually intelligible. However, languages in the same family are sometimes not mutually intelligible even when spoken side by side. Thus, for example, Amba and Bwisi, both Bantu languages that are spoken side by side in western Uganda, are not mutually intelligible; as the Bwisi put it, they cannot understand 90% of what Amba people say. However, most Amba people understand Bwisi. This is due to the power relationships between language groups rather than to any resemblances, or lack thereof, between languages.

As Hoima is part of Uganda, the linguistic situation in Uganda is relevant to this discussion. Although the 1995 Ugandan Constitution identifies English as the official language of the country, Uganda does not have a so-called national language. There are, however, languages that strive to attain this status. On the ethnic level, it is Ganda among other languages, and on the lingua franca level it is Swahili in particular. It should be noted that Swahili was declared the second official language of Uganda, after English, in the amended Constitution of 2005.

Ganda, the language of the Ganda people, is spoken widely in the central part of the country, including the capital city of Kampala. The name of the country comes from the Swahili word for the territory of the Ganda (*Buganda* in Ganda itself). Before colonization, the Ganda were just one of the ethnic groups in Uganda and occupied a rather limited area around Kampala. During the colonial period, the Ganda and their kingdom acquired increasing power, and they are now the most influential ethnic group in the country. It is quite natural for them, especially Ganda nationalists, to proclaim that Ganda should be the national language of Uganda. Indeed, during colonial times, the government officials who

worked in local areas were mostly Ganda, and Ganda was usually used in written communications. All factors resulted in Ganda becoming the most widely used ethnic language in Uganda.

In contemporary Uganda, the transportation network (especially the roads for buses and tracks) revolves around Kampala. Businessmen from all over Uganda go there to buy goods and learn Ganda. Many people also prefer to go to Kampala for schooling and medical care. These factors spread the influence of Ganda to all parts of the country.

Swahili, which originated in the East African littoral of Kenya and Tanzania, is a lingua franca in East Africa. It was initially introduced in Uganda during colonial times as the official language of the army. Soldiers were recruited primarily from Sudanic-Nilotic groups such as the Acholi, Langi, and Karamojong. Thus, this language is widespread in the northern areas. The Sudanic and Nilotic groups resort to Swahili or English when they leave their hometowns to go to other areas. However, Bantu people, with the exception of those living in the eastern area near Kenya, rarely speak Swahili voluntarily.

Swahili was also used by Indians who came to East Africa during colonial times as railroad workers and stayed as shop owners. Indeed, even in remote areas such as Hoima, all the shops were operated by Indians until 1971, when President Amin ordered them to leave the country. Because people had to speak Swahili when they went shopping, a number of people aged over 50 understand Swahili, even in remote villages. Today, young people are less able to speak Swahili, and it is rare to hear people speak Swahili in a town such as Hoima, where the dominant majority is Bantu Nyoro. However, as noted above, Swahili is used as a lingua franca in the tea and sugar factories.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was designed based on the aforementioned factors:

1. How many languages do you speak?
2. What is your tribe<sup>(3)</sup> and your native language?
3. What is your father's language? What is your mother's language?
4. What language do you use when you speak to Ganda, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi, Gungu, Ruli, Soga, Nyole, Acholi, Langi, Alur, Adhola, Teso, Karamojang, Lugbara, and other groups?
5. Where did you learn Swahili, Ganda, and other languages?
6. What language do you use when you speak to a person you don't know in Hoima?
7. What is your opinion about the national language of Uganda?
8. What is your age?
9. What is your sex?
10. What is your profession?
11. What is your educational background?
12. How long have you lived in Hoima?
13. What is your name?

These questions reflect my research interests, and the questionnaire was designed to be completed in 10–15 minutes. Although it was possible to use a more detailed questionnaire, I considered this instrument sufficient for the present stage of research.

Let us examine the questions in order. The first question “How many languages do you speak?” is an introduction to the interview and was included at the beginning to interest people in finishing the questionnaire. Respondents could answer this question with either the number or the names of the languages they spoke. In many cases, that number was inconsistent with their answer to question 4, in which they were asked which languages they used when speaking to members of various ethnic groups in the region. For example, even though a participant may have answered, “I speak only Nyoro” to question 1, he or she may have replied “Ganda” when asked what language they used to communicate with Ganda people, “Swahili” when asked what language they used to communicate with Acholi people, and so on. Therefore, the answers to this question should be interpreted both in isolation and in the context of the answers to question 4.

Question 2 addresses the ethnic group and native language of interviewees, and question 3 addresses the ethnic group and language of their father and mother.

Question 4 is the most important item in the survey. Although it has been established that most Africans are multilingual, the degree of such multilingualism remains unclear. We do not know which language they use when speaking to which people. Moreover, as it is unlikely that people speak all the languages used in a given area, we need to investigate which languages they use when they encounter languages that they do not speak. This raises the question of whether we can consider such inter-ethnic languages *lingua francas*. All these issues are implicated in question 4. One important research objective involves determining whether languages such as Swahili and Ganda function as *lingua francas* in towns such as Hoima, and whether these languages can serve as nationwide *lingua francas* in the future. To these ends, people were asked about whether they spoke each of the languages designated. As it was impossible to mention all the languages spoken in Uganda, I chose to ask about those used in western Uganda and about those spoken most commonly throughout the country.

Although I designed the questions, their full implications did not become clear to me until the research progressed. That is, the language spoken in interactions is influenced by the place such interactions occur. As this point is directly related to the conclusion of this paper, I will return to it in the subsection of “what language do people speak to whom” of the summary section.

Question 5 asks about where people who speak Swahili and Ganda learned to do so. Although only Swahili and Ganda are mentioned in this question, I asked this question about all the languages people claimed to speak.

Question 6 “What language do you use when you speak to a person you don’t know in Hoima?” seeks to identify any language that may function as a *lingua franca*, and answers to this question were interpreted in the context of those to question 7, which concerns a national language. However, the expression “a person you don’t know” was slightly unclear because I did not indicate whether it included foreigners, such as Europeans and Asians. Nonetheless, it seemed that most of those interviewed understood it to refer to Ugandans.

Question 7 addresses the problem of a national language. As stated earlier, not only does Uganda have no national language at present, no language is consistently used for communication among people speaking different languages. Thus, the question asks, "What language would be the best if one language was chosen for all the people of Uganda to use to communicate?" This question is also relevant to the problem of a lingua franca and places this issue in the context of considerations of Uganda as a whole. It should be noted that when I asked some people this question prior to the actual interview, several replied, "No Ugandan language should be the national language of Uganda." For this reason, I designed the question so that a foreign language, such as English, could serve as an answer. I will return to this point in the discussion of the linguistic situation in Uganda.

Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 concern the characteristics of interviewees. These were placed at the end of the interview so that interviewees would not interpret them as part of an interrogation. After question 13, I gave 1,000 shillings (about a half US dollar) to each interviewee as a token of gratitude.

As Hoima is not large, I moved around the town with my assistant to conduct interviews with pedestrians, roadside sellers of various articles, bicycle mechanics, motorcycle taxi drivers, retailers in the marketplace, restaurant workers, restaurant customers, carpenters working in their workshops, housewives, and so on. Most interviews were conducted in Nyoro by my assistant to put the interviewees at ease. I recorded the answers in a notebook hearing them rather than distributing questionnaires to ask to write in.

## ANALYSIS: INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLES

I will discuss several examples to provide the reader with concrete images of the situation in the research area before presenting my analysis of the dataset as a whole. Five cases are described below: a Nyoro retired bank clerk (male, 59 years of age), a Gungu used-clothes retailer working in the marketplace (female, 34 years of age), a Nyoro hotel guard (male, 43 years of age), a Ganda used-shoes salesman (male, 31 years of age), and a Nyoro student (male, 17 years of age). The social status of each of these individuals is manifested in one of their characteristic features.

### I. Nyoro Retired Bank Clerk (Male, 59 Years of Age)

This Nyoro man retired from a bank some years ago and now works as an auditor at the accounting service in the district. He lives in the suburbs of Hoima and commutes to work by taxibus. His parents and wife are also Nyoro, and he usually uses Nyoro for all his daily conversations. Although he answered "eight" to question 1 "How many languages do you speak?" his answers to subsequent questions indicate that he uses five languages. He tends to use Nyoro when conversing with people who speak different languages but who understand it. The further the language is from his own, the more likely he is to use English and Swahili in addition to Nyoro. When interacting with Nkore and Kiga people,



whose languages are very similar to his own, he sometimes includes words and expressions from these languages in his communications in the Nyoro language. He does not think it necessary to speak Tooro because the latter is so close to Nyoro. As he speaks Ganda, he may use this language with Ganda people. Depending on the circumstances, he may use English and even Nyoro if his companions are able to speak these languages. When speaking with the Soga and the Nyole, who live in the far eastern part of the country, he resorts to Ganda as he does not speak their languages. It is noteworthy that he does not use Nyoro or Ganda to speak to northern Sudanic-Nilotic peoples, but uses English and Swahili instead. It is interesting that he primarily uses English to speak to Nilotic groups, such as the Acholi and the Adhola, and primarily uses Swahili to speak with Central Sudanic groups, such as the Lugbara and the Madi.

As indicated by his answer to question 5, this retired bank clerk initially uses English with a person who is totally foreign to him. According to the respondent, this practice represents a courtesy. Moreover, he uses Nyoro with anyone who speaks it. Swahili is the last resort and is used for people who do not speak English or Nyoro.

It is interesting to note that, owing to his age, this respondent learned Swahili as a student and Ganda through printed matter, particularly the Bible.

## II. Gungu Used-Clothes Retailer in the Marketplace (Female, 34 Years of Age)

Hoima is the site of a large permanent marketplace, where all articles necessary for everyday life, such as food, clothes, and medicine, are sold. This 34-year-old woman, who lives in town, earns her living by selling used clothes. Almost all the used-clothes sellers in the marketplace are women. She usually speaks Nyoro, but she is Gungu rather than Nyoro. Her parents are also Gungu, and her native language is Gungu. She speaks Nyoro so well that one may easily mistake her for being Nyoro unless otherwise informed.

She cited four languages in answer to question 1. However, her answers to question 4 suggest that she speaks five languages. Her native language, Gungu, is used when speaking to Gungu and Ruli people because, according to her, Ruli is similar to Gungu. She uses Nyoro with Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga people, which reflects the similarity of these four languages and the practice of using a language similar to that spoken by others when one does not speak the latter.

This woman also speaks Ganda, which she uses with both Ganda and Soga people. She does not speak Soga but noted that Ganda serves well when communicating with the Soga because many Soga individuals speak Ganda. With northerners, she uses either English or Swahili. However, she may use Alur to speak to Alur people because she can speak some Alur owing to the fact that some members of this group live in Gungu territory. She uses English when speaking to some Bantu groups, such as the Konjo and the Rwanda, with whom she has little contact.

In response to question 6, she noted that she initially speaks Nyoro to a person she does not know. If Nyoro does not work, she uses English and then Swahili. She speaks Swahili and Ganda, but she learned these languages in the context of



business interactions with customers rather than at school. She learned Swahili primarily in the Hoima marketplace and learned Ganda in Kampala. Used-clothes retailers regularly travel to Kampala for business, and it is necessary to speak Ganda to conduct business in that city.

She believes that Swahili should be designated as the national language of Uganda. This choice is related to her belief that no other language enables business-related communications among people with different linguistic backgrounds, especially northerners.

### III. Nyoro Hotel Guard (Male, 43 Years of Age)

This 43-year-old hotel guard speaks Swahili, the official language of the army, because he had belonged to this organization. He is now employed as an armed guard at a hotel due to his career as a soldier. Both of his parents are Nyoro, and his native language is Nyoro.

In response to question 1, he noted that he speaks four languages; however, he seems to speak six languages based on his answer to question 4. He speaks Nyoro to Nyoro and Gungu individuals. The Gungu territory was once included in the territory of the Nyoro Kingdom, and many Gungus speak Nyoro. He uses Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga to speak to Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga individuals, respectively. In this context, “use” means making a “mere adjustment” as these four languages are very similar to one another. To Ganda people, he speaks Ganda, which he did not learn formally but learned naturally in interactions with Ganda people in Hoima and other places in Uganda. He does not know Soga and uses Ganda or Swahili to speak to Soga individuals. Along the same lines, he uses Swahili to speak to the Amba even though their language is Bantu as he does not know the latter. With Nilotic people, such as the Acholi and the Langi, he primarily uses Swahili although he sometimes responds in their own languages. With ethnic groups such as the Rwanda and the Karamojong, with whom he has had few occasions to talk, he uses Swahili.

In this way, this armed hotel guard tries to make good use of the languages he knows when he communicates with members of ethnic groups whose languages are unknown to him. When he cannot manage to deal with people of different languages by using individual languages, he resorts to Swahili for communication; it is his last means. Although he does not speak English, this does not necessarily mean that he does not know it given that he graduated from primary school. It is possible that he is not comfortable with the level of his spoken English, and that he does not feel it necessary to speak it. He supports the adoption of Swahili as the national language of Uganda.

### IV. Ganda Used-Shoe Salesman (Male, 31 Years of Age)

This Ganda man has lived in Hoima for ten years. Both his parents are Ganda, and his native language is Ganda. He earns his livelihood by selling used shoes in the marketplace in Hoima. He speaks three languages: Ganda, Nyoro, and Swahili. Although he also mentioned English in his answer to question 1, it did

not appear in his answer to question 4. As he graduated from senior 4, it is likely that he does know how to speak English; it is possible that he does not find it necessary to speak this language in everyday life.

He uses Nyoro not only with the Nyoro but also with their neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Tooro, the Nkore, the Ruli, and, to some extent, the Rwanda. With the Gungu, he uses Ganda in addition to Nyoro. He also uses Ganda with ethnic groups who live far from Hoima, such as the Kiga, the Konjo, and the Amba as well as with the Soga, who live adjacent to the Ganda. He uses Swahili exclusively with Sudanic-Nilotic groups such as the Alur, the Teso, the Karamojong, and the Lugbara.

Although he speaks his native language, Ganda, he needs to use Nyoro as he lives in Hoima, and his work activities are based in this town. He also learned Swahili through interactions with customers in the Hoima marketplace.

This individual's answer to question 6 "the language with which you address a person you don't know in Hoima," was Ganda, which seems to indicate that one can make oneself understood in Ganda even when living in a Nyoro town such as Hoima. He chose Ganda for the national language of Uganda because, according to him, "Ganda is understood everywhere in Uganda."

#### V. Nyoro Student (Male, 17 Years of Age)

This individual is a 17-year-old senior 2 student. Both his parents are Nyoro, and his native language is Nyoro. He was born in the countryside and has been living in Hoima for three years. He speaks only two languages, Nyoro and English, and says he speaks neither Ganda nor Swahili.

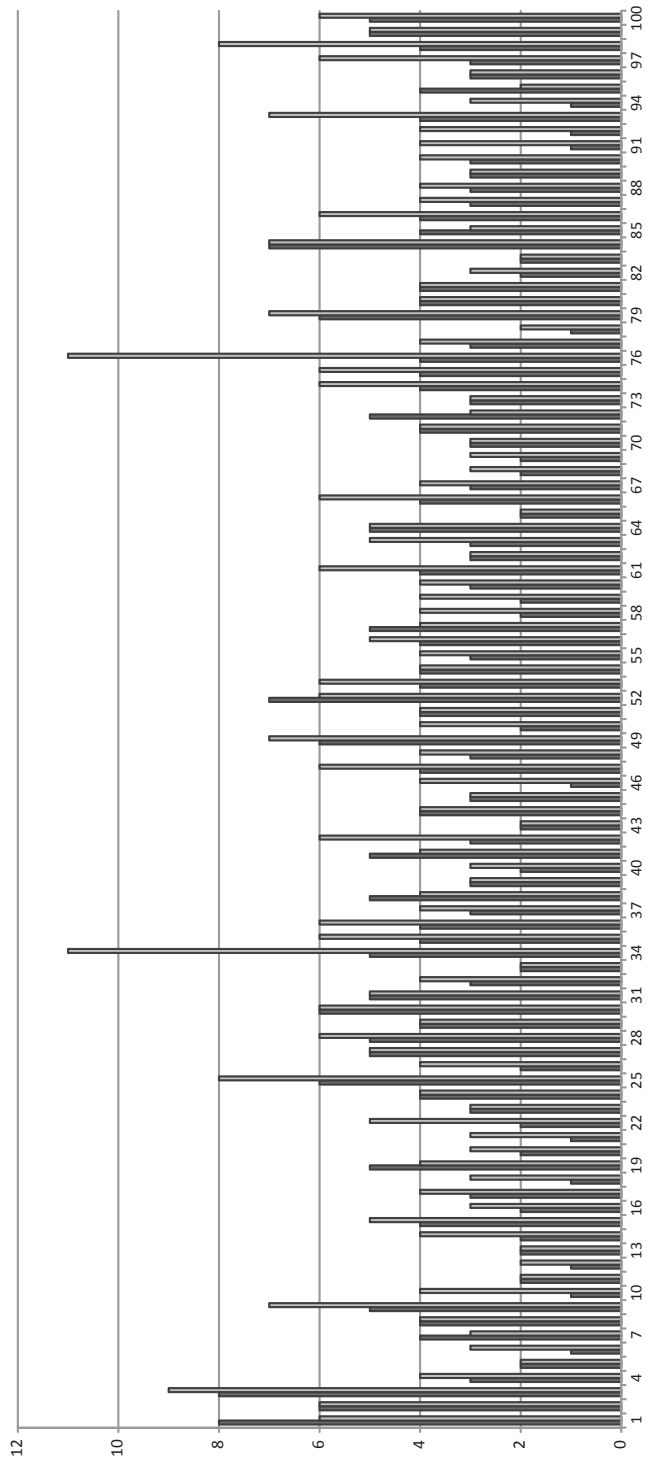
The pattern of his language use is polarized: he uses Nyoro to speak to Nyoro individuals and uses English with members of other groups, regardless of whether the person speaks a Bantu or Sudanic-Nilotic language. His answer to question 6, which asked about the language used to address a stranger in Hoima, was Nyoro. He selected English for the national language of Uganda.

### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESULTS

In this section, I summarize the data collected in the interviews.

#### I. Languages Spoken

According to the responses to question 1, the interviewees spoke an average of 3.46 languages (hereafter, "reported languages"); however, according to the responses to question 4, they actually spoke an average of 4.34 languages (hereafter, "actual languages") (Fig. 3). These data reveal a pattern in which the number of actual languages tends to be greater than the number of reported languages. For example, a respondent could claim to speak only Nyoro, but then reply that he actually speak other languages, such as Ganda and Swahili, when talking, for example, to the Ganda and the Alur, respectively.



**Fig. 3.** Number of languages spoken.

■ number of reported languages (average 3.46), □ number of actual languages (average 4.34).

The minimum and maximum numbers of reported languages were one and eight, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of actual languages were two and eleven, respectively. Ten people claimed only one reported language (nine cited Nyoro and one cited Ganda). The cases of Nyoro and Ganda individuals who claimed only one reported language are discussed below. In most cases, the number of actual languages exceeded the number of reported languages.

1) This 27-year-old Nyoro woman has lived in Hoima since birth and works as a shopkeeper at a general store. Her answer to question 1 indicated that she spoke only Nyoro, but she spoke Swahili and English in addition to Nyoro according to her answer to question 4. In her case, the number of reported languages is one, and the number of actual languages is three. She uses Nyoro with Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, and Gungu individuals, and she uses Swahili with Ganda individuals. She speaks no Ganda. She manages to communicate with northerners, such as the Acholi, the Teso, and the Lugbara, using English.

2) This 22-year-old Ganda man came to Hoima one year and seven month ago, and he worked as a woodchopper at the time of the interview. He claimed to speak only Ganda in his response to question 1, but his answers to question 4 and related questions indicated that he spoke Nyoro without problems and, to some extent, Swahili in addition to his native Ganda. In his case, the number of reported languages is one, and the number of actual languages is three. Specifically, he uses Nyoro with Nyoro, Tooro, and Gungu individuals, and he initially uses Ganda to speak to members of other ethnic groups. However, when Ganda does not work, he resorts to his somewhat flawed Swahili.

In 3 and 4 below, we discuss the cases of the two people who reported the maximum number of languages, i.e., eight.

3) This 59-year-old male Nyoro retired bank clerk was discussed above. He reported that he spoke eight languages, Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Ganda, Swahili, English, and Acholi. However, his answer to question 4 indicates that he actually uses six, Nyoro, Nkore, Kiga, Ganda, Swahili, and English. He uses Nyoro with Tooro individuals and does not speak Tooro. Actually he does not speak Acholi and uses either English or Swahili with the Acholi. The case of this retired bank clerk is rare in that the number of actual languages is fewer than the number of reported languages. This tends to happen when the number of reported languages is high. He may know Acholi but does not need to speak it.

4) This 23-year-old male Nyoro hotel worker, whose father is Nyoro and mother Ruli, claimed to be fluent in six reported languages, Nyoro, Tooro, Ruli, Ganda, Soga, and English, and to have limited knowledge of two additional languages, Swahili and French. This totals eight languages, and he cited a total of nine actual languages, Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Ganda, Soga, Ruli, English, and Swahili. French, which appeared among his reported languages, can be used in communication with Rwandan people, with whom he actually communicates in English and Swahili. Nkore and Kiga, which did not appear in his reported languages, are used in communication with Nkore and Kiga people, respectively. Thus, the number of his reported languages exceeds the number of actual languages by one.

No respondent proved to have only one actual language. That is, all interviewees were multilingual, speaking more than two languages. Ten people cited only two actual languages. Of these, nine were Nyoro, with four people speaking Nyoro and English, three speaking Nyoro and Ganda, and two speaking Nyoro and Swahili. The remaining one, a Ganda individual, speaks Ganda and Nyoro. Each speaks his or her native language plus either English, Swahili, Ganda, or Nyoro, the four representative languages. It is interesting that people try to make maximal use of the languages they know when they interact with people who speak different languages in a multilingual situation. Thus for example, the Nyoro student mentioned earlier who spoke two actual languages resorts to English to communicate with all ethnic groups other than his own.

Finally, we will discuss the two cases in which the number of actual languages was eleven.

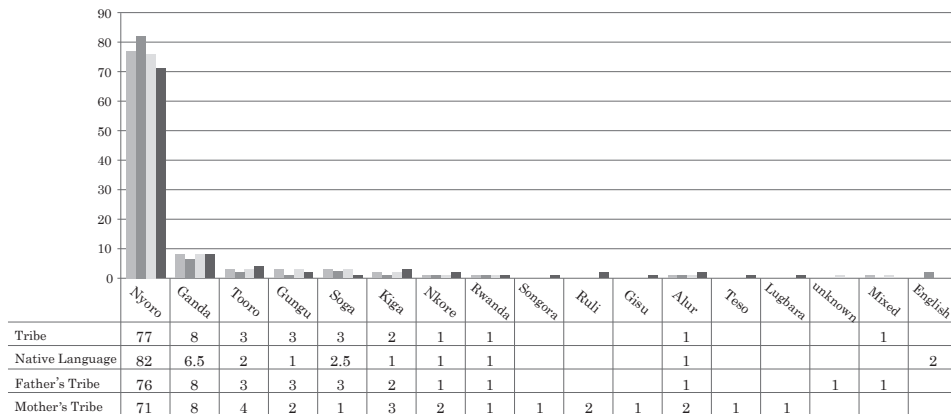
5) This 36-year-old male Kiga motorcycle taxi driver cited four reported languages, Kiga, Nyoro, Swahili, and Alur, and eleven actual languages, Kiga, Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Rwanda, Gungu, Amba, Bwisi, Ganda, Alur, and Swahili. He uses Kiga, Tooro, Nkore, Rwanda, Gungu, Amba, and Bwisi to communicate with these respective ethnic groups and uses Nyoro to communicate with Nyoro, Ruli, and Soga individuals. Additionally, he uses Ganda with Ganda and Soga individuals, and Alur to speak to Alur and Acholi individuals. For all other ethnic groups, he uses Swahili. He does not speak English.

6) This 15-year-old male Nyoro student cited five reported languages, Nyoro, Nkore, Kiga, Ganda, and English, and eleven actual languages, Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Ruli, Ganda, Soga, Acholi, Langi, and English. He uses Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Soga, Ruli, Acholi, and Langi to communicate with these respective ethnic groups and Nyoro to talk with Nyoro and Karamojong individuals. He speaks Ganda with Ganda, Amba, and Lugbara individuals and English with all other groups. He does not speak Swahili.

This subsection, which discussed several individual cases, underscored that speaking more languages was associated with the attitude of dealing with different ethnic groups by speaking individual languages. We will return to this observation in the section of discussion.

## II. Ethnic Identity

According to the responses to question 2, most interviewees, i.e., 77 of 100, were Nyoro, which was expected as the interviews occurred in one of the areas with the highest concentrations of the Nyoro people (Fig. 4). However, as Hoima is a town, a number of people come from other areas. Eight Ganda people were among the interviewees. The other notable ethnic groups were neighboring Tooro (three people), Gungu (three people), and Kiga (two people). Three individuals who identified as Soga were also interviewed.



**Fig. 4.** Tribes, native languages, and father's and mother's languages.

### III. Ethnic Identities of Father and Mother

The ethnic identities of the fathers and mothers of the interview subjects are essentially the same as those of the subjects themselves. However, the ethnic identities of the mothers are slightly more diverse than are those of the fathers (Fig. 4). One woman did not know the ethnic identity of her father (her mother is Ganda) due to the fact that she was born outside marriage. She considers herself to be Ganda as she has lived in the Ganda area for a long time, and she speaks Ganda as her native language.

### IV. What Language do People Speak to Whom

This question, the most important one in the interview, asked about the languages used to communicate with various ethnic groups. The results are presented in Table 1. As particular examples were discussed earlier, I will address the results as a whole below.

Table 1 is a sum-up of the results of the responses by the 100 people interviewed. The responses are presented in three cases: (1) Speak one's own language, (2) Speak the other person's language, (3) Use a tertiary language.

(1.a), for example, shows that the Nyoro people (=Nyoro speakers) answered that they use their own language Nyoro to Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi, Gungu, Ruli, Ganda, Soga, Nyole, Acholi, Alur, Adhola, Karamojang, and Lugbara individuals. This is not an answer of one person, but a sum-up of all the answers of the 77 Nyoro interviewed. Tendencies are presented in boldface to underscore recurring patterns. For example, as the Nyoro speak Nyoro to other Nyoro individuals, Nyoro appears in boldface. Additionally, as many Nyoro individuals answered that they also speak Nyoro

**Table 1.** What language to use to whom by various ethnic groups living in Hoima

<b>1. Speak one's own language</b>	
a.	Nyoro: <b>Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore</b> , Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi, <b>Gungu, Ruli, Ganda</b> , Soga, Nyole, <i>Acholi, Alur, Adhola, Karamojang, Lugbara</i>
b.	Tooro: <b>Tooro</b> , Nyoro, <b>Konjo</b> , Ganda, Nyole
c.	Nkore: Nkore, Nyoro, Tooro, Kiga, Rwanda, Amba, Gungu, Ruli, Soga
d.	Kiga: <b>Kiga</b>
e.	Gungu: <b>Gungu, Ruli</b>
f.	Rwanda: Rwanda, Ganda
g.	Ganda: <b>Ganda, Nyoro</b> , Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Gungu, Ruli, <b>Soga</b> , Nyole, <i>Acholi, Teso</i>
h.	Soga: Soga
i.	<i>Alur: Alur, Acholi, Langi</i>
<b>2. Speak the other person's language</b>	
a.	Nyoro: <b>Tooro, Nkore, Kiga</b> , Rwanda, Konjo, Gungu, Ruli, <b>Ganda</b> , Soga, <i>Acholi, Alur, Langi, Lugbara</i>
b.	Tooro: <b>Nyoro, Nkore, Kiga</b> , Konjo, Ruli, Ganda
c.	Nkore: Ganda
d.	Kiga: <b>Nyoro</b> , Tooro, Nkore, Rwanda, Amba, Bwisi, Gungu, Ganda, <i>Alur</i>
e.	Gungu: <b>Nyoro, Ganda, Alur</b>
f.	Rwanda: Nyoro, Ganda
g.	Ganda: <b>Nyoro</b> , Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda
h.	Soga: <b>Nyoro</b> , Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, <b>Ganda</b>
i.	<i>Alur: Nyoro, Ganda, Lugbara</i>
<b>3. Use a tertiary language</b>	
a.	English: Tooro, Nkore, <b>Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi</b> , Gungu, Ruli, Ganda, Soga, <b>Nyole, Masaaba</b> , <i>Acholi, Langi, Alur, Adhola, Teso, Karamojang, Lugbara, Madi</i>
b.	Swahili: Nkore, <b>Rwanda, Konjo, Amba</b> , Bwisi, Gungu, Ruli, Ganda, Soga, <b>Nyole, Masaaba, Acholi, Langi, Alur, Adhola, Teso, Karamojang, Lugbara, Madi, Kenyans, Tanzanians</b>
c.	Ganda: Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi, Gungu, Ruli, <b>Soga, Nyole, Masaaba, Acholi, Langi, Alur, Teso, Lugbara</b>
d.	Nyoro: <b>Tooro, Nkore, Kiga</b> , Rwanda, Konjo, <b>Gungu, Ruli</b> , Ganda, Soga
e.	Tooro: Nkore, Kiga, <b>Konjo, Amba</b> , Ngungu, <i>Alur</i>
f.	Nkore: <b>Kiga</b> , Rwanda, Amba, Soga
g.	Kiga: <b>Nkore</b> , Rwanda, Konjo, Gungu
h.	Konjo: Amba, Bwisi
i.	Gungu: <b>Ruli, Teso</b>
j.	Ruli: <b>Gungu</b>
k.	<i>Acholi: Nyole, Masaaba, Langi, Alur, Adhola, Karamojang</i>
l.	<i>Alur: Ruli, Acholi, Langi, Teso</i>
m.	<i>Lugbara: Madi, Adhola</i>



with Tooro, Nkore, Gungu, Ruli, and Ganda individuals, the names of these groups also appear in boldface. In contrast, Kiga, Rwanda, Konjo, Amba, Bwisi, Soga, Nyole, Acholi, Alur, Adhola, Karamojang, and Lugbara do not appear in boldface because although some people answered that they use Nyoro to those groups, they were not numerous. Italics are used to indicate Sudanic-Nilotic languages; languages not in italics are Bantu languages.

With respect to (2) “Speak the other person’s language,” (2.a) for example, indicates that many Nyoro speak Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, and Ganda to Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, and Ganda, individuals respectively. With respect to (3) “Use a tertiary language,” it indicates use of a tertiary language when communicating with someone who speaks a different language. According to (3.a), for example, English is used when speaking to many language groups. (Here, “who speak” is not shown; they may be either Nyoro or other ethnic members.) From this perspective, we can say that all the languages listed from (3.a) English through (3.m) Lugbara, serve as *lingua francas* in some situations.

In what follows, I summarize the data presented in Table 1. First, with respect to (1) “Speak one’s own language,” it is clear that the Nyoro people use their own language with almost all ethnic groups in Uganda. However, at the same time, (2.a) shows that Nyoro people also use the other person’s language when speaking with many ethnic groups in Uganda. Thus, they use their own language as well as that of others when speaking with members of other ethnic groups. Does this mean that they engage code-switching while speaking? Although this may happen in some cases, it does not occur in most cases, as shown by data on the linguistic behaviors of ethnic groups other than the Nyoro, which are presented in (2) “Speak the other person’s language.” In (2), Nyoro is listed as the language used in speaking by the Tooro (2.b) through the Alur (2.i), with the exception of the Nkore (2.c). Moreover, in most cases Nyoro appears in boldface, indicating that almost all of the ethnic groups living in Hoima report using Nyoro in communications with the Nyoro. (In (2), as the Rwanda and the Alur are represented by one person each, they are not in boldface. The Nkore are also represented by only one person.)

Actually, 23 of the 100 people interviewed did not identify as Nyoro, i.e., eight identify as Ganda, three as Gungu, three as Soga, two as Kiga, one as Nkore, one as Rwanda, one as Alur, and one as having a mixed ethnic identity (see Fig. 4). Of these, all except the Nkore individual responded that they speak Nyoro to the Nyoro. Even Ganda speakers, who say that Ganda is understood everywhere, reported using Nyoro to speak to the Nyoro in Hoima. The only person who said that he would not use Nyoro with the Nyoro was a 27-year-old Nkore man who came to Hoima from Kampala six months before the interview. His reported languages were English and Nkore, and his actual languages were English, Nkore, and Ganda. He responded that he uses Nkore not only with Nyoro but also with Tooro, Nkore, Kiga, Rwanda, Amba, Gungu, Ruli, and Soga individuals in Hoima. He can make himself understood in Nkore in Hoima because, as noted above, Nyoro, Tooro, Nkore, and Kiga are very similar to one another and are mutually intelligible. It may be that he always speaks the Nkore language, which is slightly different from Nyoro but nonetheless intelligible to Nyoro individuals, to indicate

his non-Nyoro identity.

This raises my aforementioned confusion regarding question 4. I did not initially consider the locations at which languages are used and assumed that such use would be consistent across venues. However, I came to realize that language use differs greatly depending on the place at which it occurs. That is, the ability of Nyoro individuals to speak various languages can be observed when they visit places dominated by other ethnic groups. Although they are multilingual, they tend to speak only Nyoro in Hoima, which is consistent with the reports of members of other ethnic groups of speaking Nyoro with the Nyoro in Hoima. These are two sides of the same coin. The non-Nyoro individuals interviewed reside in Hoima and speak other people's languages outside their home area. This is consistent with the fact that the Nyoro, who are multilingual, show their ability to speak other languages when they travel outside their home area. That is, regardless of their ethnic identity and native language, people speak their language in their home area and speak, or at least try to speak, the home language of the places they visit. Multilingualism and the intention to speak other people's languages when traveling outside one's own home areas guarantees monolingualism in home areas.

According to (3) "Use a tertiary language," many languages, from (3.a) English through (3.m) Lugbara, appear as *lingua francas*. What does this mean?

Let us examine (3.e) Tooro, as an example. A 24-year-old Nyoro man answered that he uses Tooro not only with Tooro individuals but also with Nkore, Kiga, Konjo, and Amba individuals. Tooro is very similar to the Nyoro language. Therefore, even though a Nyoro person says that he speaks Tooro, he may be actually speaking Nyoro. Nevertheless, speaking in the Tooro style represents an attempt to make his language more understandable not only to Tooro but also Nkore, Kiga, Konjo, and Amba individuals. This reflects an approach to relating to a person whose language is different from one's own in which, of the languages known by the speaker, the one that is closest to the other person's language is used.

Nkore and Kiga are similar to Nyoro and Tooro, but although they are all Bantu, Konjo and Amba differ considerably from them. In this context, it makes no sense to speak Tooro with someone who does not understand it. However, most Konjo and Amba individuals understand Tooro due to the historical influence of Tooro on the areas of the Konjo and the Amba, which had been included in the Tooro Kingdom. Even today, many Konjo and Amba individuals speak Tooro. In this case, Tooro is used as a *lingua franca* for historical reasons.

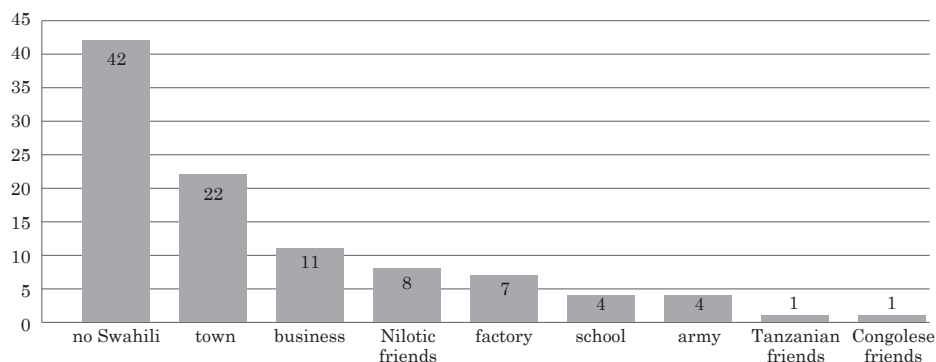
Next, we will examine the case of (3.c) Ganda. Like Swahili (3.b), Ganda works as a common language for many ethnic groups. However, possibly because the interviews were conducted in Hoima, most instances of using Ganda to speak to people of different language groups involve ethnic groups living east of the Ganda, such as the Soga, the Nyole, and the Masaaba. Of course, many Nyoro people use English and Swahili to speak to the Soga, the Nyole, and the Masaaba, but those who know Ganda also use it to communicate with them because Ganda, Soga, Nyole, and Masaaba, all spoken in central and eastern Uganda, share more similarities with one another than they do with Nyoro, which is a west Ugandan language. Additionally, the influence of Ganda is much stronger in the east than

in the west of the country. For this reason, those Nyoro who do not speak Soga, Nyole, or Masaaba resort to Ganda when they want to speak to these groups. Therefore, even though Ganda is used as a common language, its use is conditional, in the same way as the use of Tooro by Nyoro individuals who do not speak Konjo or Amba is conditional. These are *lingua francas* in a limited sense.

Gungu (3.i) and Ruli (3.j) also work in the same way. As Gungu and Ruli are similar to each other, one can use Ruli to speak to a Gungu person if he or she knows Ruli and does not know Gungu, and vice versa. This also holds for all other ethnic languages. Thus, although all ethnic languages function as common languages, they act as proxy *lingua francas* only. They are quasi-*lingua francas*.

In contrast, Swahili (3.b) and, especially English (3.a) have wider use as *lingua francas*. However, this does not mean that their use is unrestricted. For the Nyoro, English works as a *lingua franca* with slightly distant Bantu groups, such as the Konjo, the Bwisi, the Amba, the Nyole, and the Masaaba, and also with Sudanic-Nilotic groups, such as the Acholi, the Langi, the Karamojong, the Lugbara, and the Madi. Swahili also works in this way. If one knows English, one uses it, and if one knows Swahili, one uses it. Those who know both tend to use English to communicate with Nilotic groups, such as the Acholi, the Langi, the Teso, and the Karamojong, and Swahili to communicate with Central Sudanic groups, such as the Lugbara and the Madi. It seems that Swahili is more frequently used in the northwestern region (i.e., the Western Nile District), where Central Sudanic Lugbara and Madi are predominantly spoken.

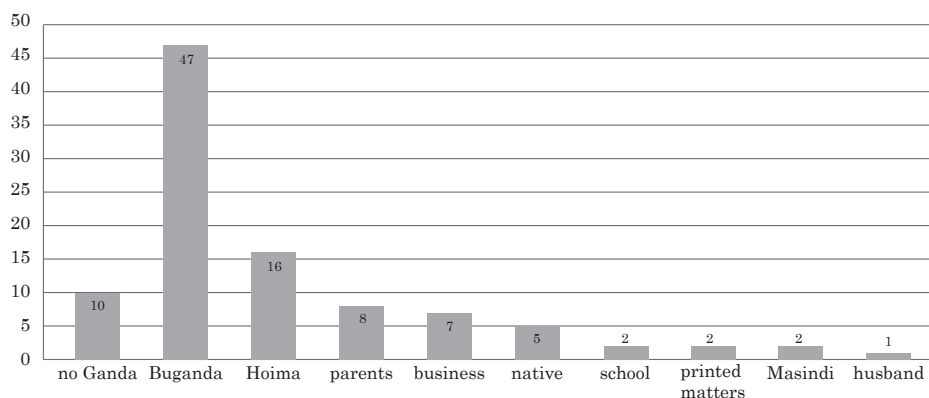
We can summarize the results of (3) "Use a tertiary language," as follows. People typically try to respond to the languages of other ethnic groups on an individual basis when these are spoken in their respective home areas. However, people usually cannot speak all languages. For this reason, they try to use the linguistic abilities they do have as effectively as possible. That is, one uses the various ethnic languages he/she knows as common languages. In this way, almost all the languages in Uganda, regardless of their prevalence, appear as common languages. Konjo and Gungu, for example, have smaller speaker populations, whereas Nyoro and Tooro have medium-sized speaker populations, and English and Swahili have large speaker populations. Ganda is also a language with a sizeable speaker population, but it is usually categorized with languages such as Nyoro and Tooro. English and Swahili are spoken only when individual local languages cannot work as a common language. The use of English and Swahili depends greatly on linguistic competence and knowledge. If a person knows many local languages, English and Swahili languages are spoken less frequently; however, if one knows fewer languages, they are spoken more frequently. (Of course, some people do not speak English and/or Swahili at all.) This differs greatly from the situation in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, for example, where people resort to Swahili at the beginning of an interchange without trying to respond in the appropriate local language. In Tanzania, the use of Swahili is widespread. In contrast, that many local languages appear as common languages means that Swahili and English are less widespread in Uganda.



**Fig. 5.** Where Swahili was learned.

## V. Learning Swahili and Ganda

According to the answers to question 5 “Where did you learn Swahili?” only four participants learned it “at school,” whereas the others learned it outside of school, e.g., “in town,” “in business,” etc. (Fig. 5). It is noteworthy that eight people reported learning Swahili from Nilotic people, including one person who has Alur friends in his hometown near Lake Albert, where a number of Alur people live. Seven people said that they learned to speak it in factories. Indeed, Swahili functions as a lingua franca in large factories, such as the tea factory near Hoima and the sugarcane factory near Masindi, where people of various linguistic backgrounds gather to work. Four people said that they learned Swahili in the army. Two individuals responded that they learned it from Tanzanian and Congolese friends. However, we should also note that a considerable number of people, 42, said that they do not speak Swahili.



**Fig. 6.** Where Ganda was learned.

The majority of the respondents who speak Ganda answered that they learned it “in Buganda,” which is the territory of the Ganda people (Fig. 6). Buganda includes Kampala city, the capital of Uganda, Kiboga city, located between Kampala and Hoima, and Mukono city, located east of Kampala. This does not necessarily mean that those people lived in Ganda areas. Instead, it reflects that used-clothing retailers in Hoima, for example, visit these cities, especially Kampala, for business; they thus learned Ganda as a business tool. The number of responses referencing “in business” corresponds almost exactly to those referencing “in Ganda areas” although sixteen people said that they learned Ganda “in Hoima,” and two people said they learned it “in Masindi.” In these cases as well, people learned Ganda by speaking with Ganda individuals. This means that they learned Ganda outside of school. Ten people said that they do not speak Ganda.

Two people answered they learned Ganda “at school.” Both are Nyoro; one learned it at school in Kampala, and the other says that the teachers spoke Ganda as the medium of instruction at the business school he attended in Jinja city. Only one person formally learned Ganda at school.

## VI. Languages Used to Speak to Strangers in Hoima

In response to question 6 “What language do you use when you speak to a person you don’t know in Hoima?” an overwhelming number (67 people) answered Nyoro (Fig. 7). Next, in decreasing order, were English (26 people), Swahili (three people), and Ganda (two people). Two people said that the language they use to communicate with a stranger depends on the person and cannot be decided in advance.

Many people speak to strangers in Nyoro for two reasons. The first relates to the assumption that anyone who lives in Hoima must speak Nyoro. This is a reasonable assumption as most non-native Nyoro speakers in Hoima say that they speak Nyoro.

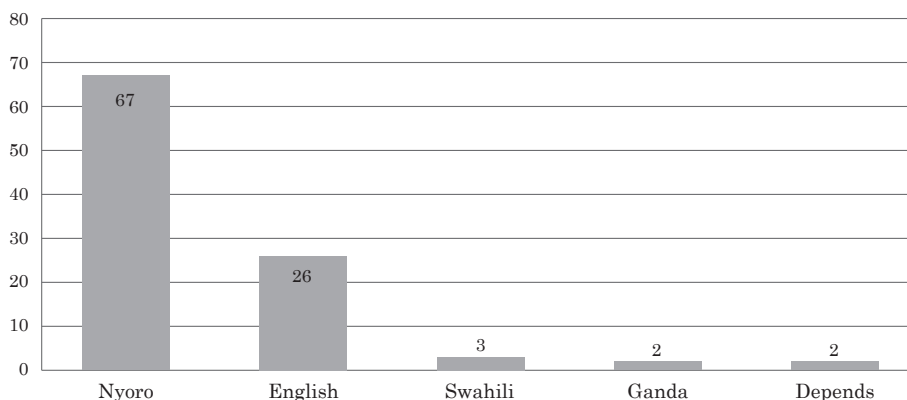


Fig. 7. Language used to address a stranger in Hoima.

The other reason that many people speak to strangers in Nyoro relates to the strategy of choosing the language with which to communicate with a stranger based on the person. Closer analysis of the answers provided by those who speak to strangers in Nyoro revealed that many of them arrived at this decision by looking at the physiognomy and clothing of the person to whom they were speaking to determine their ethnicity. That many people answered that they speak to strangers in Nyoro was actually a way of saying that most residents of Hoima are Nyoro.

From this perspective, we can see that people who know English and cannot ascertain the ethnicity of a person first try English, and that those who know Swahili but not English try Swahili to see whether these languages will work for communication. In this context, “trying a language” results in many people switching to Nyoro after first trying English. This is why a substantial number of people answered “English” to this question. That only three people answered “with Swahili” does not necessarily mean that few people use Swahili; it means only that few people use it at the beginning of an exchange. Many people first try English, and then switch to Swahili if they see that English does not work. It appears that people consider English to be more polite and widely known than Swahili.

The two people who answered “with Ganda” are both Ganda. One is a 22-year-old man who has lived in Hoima for one year and seven months, and the other is a 31-year-old man who has lived in Hoima for ten years. Although their answer was “Ganda,” this does not mean that they do not speak Nyoro; in fact, both do speak Nyoro. The first person said that he first tries Ganda and then changes to Nyoro if Ganda does not work. The second man may be expressing his sense of the superiority of Ganda because he favored Ganda as the national language of Uganda in his response to question 7 (saying that it is understood everywhere). Of course, many Ganda individuals think that one should speak the local language and say that they use Nyoro to address people in Hoima even though they have been in Hoima less than one year.

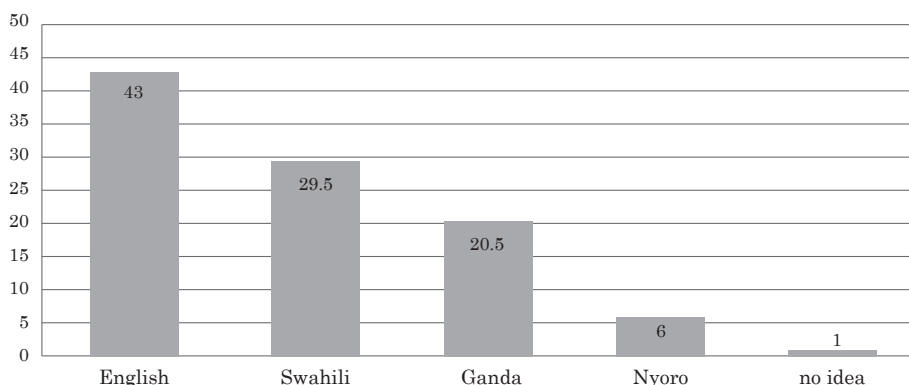


Fig. 8. Opinion on a national language.

## VII. The National Language of Uganda

As stated earlier, Uganda has no national state-decreed language. It also does not have a lingua franca that is understood by people all over the country. Thus, we are faced with the question of what language should be used by all the people of Uganda for nationwide communication. According to the interviews, 43 people supported the selection of English, 29.5 people favored Swahili, 20.5 people selected Ganda, 6 people chose Nyoro, and one person had no preference (Fig. 8). The figure “0.5” represents the fact that some people cited two languages, such as English and Swahili or Swahili and Ganda, and so on. In such cases, I awarded 0.5 points to each language. However, if interviewees ranked the languages (e.g., “first English, second Swahili”), I counted only the first language and discarded the second.

Due to lack of space, I must omit a full discussion of the reasons that various languages were chosen as national language and limit my comments to what follows. First, concerning English, interviewees noted that English is a good language but is difficult to learn; they thought it would be impossible for the whole population to speak English. Additionally, one must attend school to learn English. In contrast, some people commented that Swahili and Ganda are good languages because people do not need to go to school to learn them. However, these languages are probably easier for Bantu speakers, whereas northerners who speak Sudanic-Nilotic languages such as Acholi and Lugbara, may find them more difficult. Specifically, ethnic languages such as Nyoro and Ganda have complicated structures, and it is difficult for Sudanic-Nilotic people to learn them (of course, the converse is also true). In this respect, Swahili is valued highly for its simplicity, which is attributable to its simplified morpho-syntactic structure. However, we should note that Swahili is thought to be associated with violence in Uganda, and people do not necessarily like the language. This association derives from the role of Swahili as the official language of the army and police and its widespread promotion during the reign of the dictator Idi Amin (1971–79).

Nevertheless, as Swahili is widely used in East Africa, many people regard it as an important language for economic reasons. In 2001, Uganda again participated in the East African Community with Kenya and Tanzania, and the customs union among these nations started in 2005. In 2007, Rwanda and Burundi joined the Community, which has now expanded to include five countries. Swahili is widely spoken in these countries, especially Kenya and Tanzania. Burundi and Rwanda also encourage Swahili, and it is widely spoken in the eastern part of DR Congo, Uganda’s western neighbor. All of these factors mean that Swahili has the potential to function as the medium for business communication across diverse ethnic languages and even across English and French. This is a very attractive possibility from an economic perspective, and the appeal of Swahili is linked to economic gain.

Issues of nationalism always arise in connection with the problem of national languages. This is especially true in the case of the Ganda in Uganda. In the interviews, however, no people expressed strong support for this position, possibly because the interviews were conducted in Hoima, the central town of the Nyoro people. It is noteworthy that six people supported Nyoro as the national language.



Furthermore, it is interesting that three of these supporters were pure Nyoro, whereas the other three were Gungu, Tooro, and Ganda, all of whom spoke Nyoro as their native language.

In short, none of the languages suggested as the possible national language of Uganda —English, Swahili, Ganda, and Nyoro— has a decisive advantage.

### VIII. Demographic Characteristics

This subsection summarizes the features of the interviewees. First, the interviewees ranged from teenagers to people in their 60s, and the number of men and women was equal, i.e., 50 males and 50 females. (This was an unintended result.) In terms of occupation, interviewees held a variety of jobs, ranging from hotel guards to students and housewives. Their educational backgrounds varied from primary school dropouts to graduates of technical colleges. Most people, i.e., 69 of 100, had lived in Hoima since birth, probably because the interviewees were predominantly Nyoro. The sample also included a Ganda woodcutter who came to Hoima two months ago. It was my intention to investigate the use of language by Hoima inhabitants, including newcomers.

## DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss the language use by inhabitants of Hoima, who are primarily Nyoro.

Although Hoima is an apparently monolingual town, all residents are, in fact, multilingual. This ostensible contradiction can be understood in the context of people's language attitudes. That is, people think that they should speak other people's languages when visiting other people's lands, but they also think that other people should speak their language when visiting their land. People respect themselves and thus respect other people as well. In other words, they know that giving respect to other people leads others to respect them. This is reasonable because it is difficult to live in a place in which one does not know the language. Taken together, these factors lead to the attitude that anyone who settles in one's land should learn to speak the local language. However, the issue of *lingua franca* emerges because people cannot speak all languages.

Clarity requires that we distinguish between a common language and a *lingua franca*. In this context, "common language" refers to any language C which is used by persons with different native languages A and B, to communicate with each other. A common language can be a small local language; for example, as Gungu is used by some Nyoro individuals to communicate with Ruli individuals in the Ruli area due to the former's inability to speak Ruli. In contrast, a *lingua franca* is a common language used by a substantial number of people of the region who speak different languages.

In this respect Ganda, which is said to be "understood everywhere" in Uganda, lacks the features of a *lingua franca* not only in Hoima but also across Uganda. Although Ganda is spoken much in Uganda, this is because the Ganda people are

numerous, and many people from various parts of Uganda go to Kampala on a frequent basis, and learn some Ganda there. Local people may also interact with Ganda individuals who visit their homelands in Ganda. The historical factor noted in the section of the linguistic situation in Uganda is also relevant in this regard.

Among Nyoro individuals, Ganda functions as a common language in only the eastern groups, such the Soga, the Nyole, the Masaaba, and so on. Ganda can be spoken in Hoima when either the speaker or the addressees, or both, are Ganda. However, it is quite unimaginable that a Tooro individual, for example, would use Ganda to talk to an Acholi individual in Hoima. If they know the other person's language, they use that language to communicate. Otherwise, they use English, Swahili, or Nyoro. Nyoro is quite naturally used among long-time residents of Hoima, and this is the case with regard to communication not only between the Tooro and the Acholi but also, in principle, with regard to communication among all ethnic groups in Hoima. In this respect, Nyoro can be said to function as a *lingua franca* in the limited area of Hoima (and Masindi) in that a defined and substantial number of people use it as a common language. Of course, this phenomenon is also evident in the Ganda area with respect to the Ganda language in that Ganda serves as a *lingua franca* in this limited region. Each of the Ugandan languages, by extension, can be said to be a local language as well as a *lingua franca* in its area. (This must be confirmed for each individual language.)

Unlike Nyoro, Ganda, and so on, English and Swahili are not geographically limited with respect to the area in which they operate as *lingua francas*. Indeed, they can be used as *lingua francas* throughout Uganda. However, they cannot be characterized as *lingua francas* in the real sense of this term because a *lingua franca* are not just common languages; indeed, they are common languages for a substantial number of people. In this respect, it cannot be said that English and Swahili are used by many people. This point can be clarified by a comparison between the Ugandan situation with that in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. Almost 100% of the residents of Dar-es-Salaam use Swahili as a common language, whereas only 58 people of the 100 interviewed in Hoima reported that they speak Swahili (Fig. 5). More importantly, Swahili is not the sole option for a common language in Hoima. The same point applies to English as well. A total of 73 of the 100 people reported that they spoke English.

What follows is a summary of the language attitudes expressed by the residents of Hoima.

- 1) People use their own language in their own domain.
- 2) In other people's domains, they speak the other people's language as much as possible. However, they may continue to use their own language if the other people's language is similar to their own and local people can understand it.
- 3) When individuals do not know the language spoken in an area inhabited by another group or when visitors to one's own area do not speak the local language, a tertiary language that is known by all parties is used. In this case, the tertiary language may be a *lingua franca*, English or Swahili, or any local languages.

- 4) The local language used as a common language is the one known by the speaker that is closest to the language spoken by others.
- 5) English and Swahili are used as common languages only when local languages do not work as such.

As an example of 1, above, we can cite the case of the Nyoro individual who uses Nyoro with everyone in Hoima. Ganda individuals who speak Nyoro in Hoima exemplify 2. However, as in the case of the Nkore man who lives in Hoima and continues to use Nkore to communicate, individuals can, on rare occasions, continue to use their own language owing to the similarity of the latter with the local language. Examples of 3 and 4 include cases in which some Nyoro individuals use Tooro in the Bwisi area or Ganda with the Soga, and some Gungu individuals use Alur to speak with the Acholi.

When we understand that, as a rule, Nyoro individuals in particular, and Ugandans in general, use other peoples' languages in other peoples' areas, we understand that the various languages listed in (3) of Table 1, with the possible exceptions of English and Swahili, function temporarily as common languages when people are not able to speak the language spoken by others because they have not stayed there for long.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper attempts to clarify the language attitudes held by the Nyoro people based on data obtained through interviews with 100 residents of the city of Hoima in western Uganda. The results revealed that, although Hoima is the central location of the Nyoro people and residents predominantly use the Nyoro language, all inhabitants are actually multilingual. This situation relates to the facts that the language size is relatively small and a number of the languages are spoken side by side in this area. More importantly, as no real *lingua francas* exist, people are obliged to deal with the various languages individually. In the town of Hoima itself, one can communicate only if one knows Nyoro, as members of other ethnic groups who visit or settle in Hoima also speak Nyoro. This, in turn, means that the Nyoro people speak other peoples' languages when they visit the latter's lands. It is this phenomenon that this paper refers to as a monolingual state underpinned by multilingualism. Of course, when English and Swahili function as actual *lingua francas*, the number of languages used by the people may diminish. However, this is not the case in Hoima or in Uganda in general.

Hoima residents speak many more languages than do people in the other sites of my fieldwork (e.g., the eastern Congo, Tanzania, etc.). In this sense, the linguistic situation in Hoima provides a valuable example of what can happen in Africa in the absence of a fully developed *lingua franca*.

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## NOTES

- (1) Grimes (2000) cites 37 languages and, in a new version of *Ethnologue*, Lewis (2009) enumerates 45 languages, two of which are now dead.
- (2) This article largely omits the prefixes “language of,” “people of,” and so on. Thus, the following usage patterns are employed: concerning Nyoro: *omunyor* “a Nyoro person/individual,” *abanyor* “Nyoro people,” *orunyor* “the Nyoro language,” concerning Adhola: *japadhola* “an Adhola person/individual,” *jopadhola* “Adhola people,” and *dhopadhola* “the Adhola language,” and so on.
- (3) As the word “tribe” is used in Uganda, it was used in the questionnaire.

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